

16 March 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: SIG ON CENTRAL AMERICA

1. The SIG convened under Judge Clark on 16 March. Present were Mr. Carlucci, Gen. Pustay, Mr. Ikle, Mr. West, Ms. Dyke, and Messrs. Wolfowitz, Burt, Enders, McFarlane, Fontaine, Allen, Stein and myself.

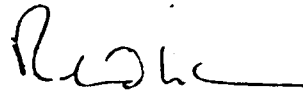
2. The meeting opened with a discussion of the broad strategy paper for Central America. There was considerable discussion of the "going to the source" approach, with Carlucci arguing that the paper was all right on Central America but overstated our capabilities against Cuba. Enders outlined a number of economic measures that might be taken to strengthen the Central America portion of the paper. It was agreed that the Central America elements (#'s 1, 4, 5 & 8) would be brought before the NSC on Thursday. The Cuban elements would be reworked and presented later. We were asked to provide an assessment of Cuban vulnerabilities as part of this exercise. (I assume we have material on the shelf that will suit.)

3. The meeting then turned to the question of a determination on Nicaragua. I led off with a short briefing using the text of the prepared presentation with the exception of the two ticks in Paragraph 4. I noted that until coordination on the paper had been completed, it should be understood that these were CIA positions. Enders added that he did not believe these positions were contentious ones and no one took issue. Judge Clark then expressed some unhappiness that the Community in 30 days could not "find out" precisely what was going on. He said that what we had here were theories, not evidence. I responded that I had been reading the conclusions of a paper and had not presented the evidence that lay behind it. There was evidence, but it was fragmentary, as is usual in intelligence situations. The sum of the evidence formed a persuasive case for intelligence officers but it did not prove the case in a court of law, or for Congress or the public. Carlucci weighed in in support of my position.

4. Enders then presented the options paper. He said that the intelligence case rules out Options 1 and 2. As to 3 and 4, he felt that the longer we delayed a showdown with Nicaragua the better off we were. Therefore, he recommended Option 4. After some more discussion,

it was agreed that Option 4 would be recommended to the NSC on Thursday with the reference to PL-480 aid changed to eliminate any suggestion that we would deliver in three weeks. [redacted]

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Richard Lehman
Chairman
National Intelligence Council

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